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ABSTRACT

The booklet describes an activity designed to help nonhandicapped persons understand and develop solutions to problematic situations faced by mentally and physically handicapped students, their parents, and school personnel. The assumption is made that integration is desirable, and the issue therefore becomes not whether children with disabilities shall be integrated, but what will be the outcomes of that integration. The booklet presents 11 different problem categories with six problems in each. Categories include: uses for an object, list of items in a category, possible consequences of non-social and social antecedents, number of things fitting certain constraints (social and nonsocial), number of solutions for a social and nonsocial problem, antecedents of a consequence (nonsocial), behaviorals to achieve a social outcome, and antecedents of a social consequence. Participants work on the problems in teams and are encouraged to focus upon process as well as content. (CL)

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SPECIAL ALTERNATIVES

A Learning System for Generating Unique Solutions to Problems of Special Education in Integrated Settings

by

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INTRODUCTION

Special Alternatives is an activity that instructs both through the process by which the players participate and through the content itself. In general, participation enhances the player's ability, both as an individual and as a group member, to quickly generate a large number of *unique* solutions to a variety of problematic situations. The participant is required to confront some of the issues and problems faced by special education children, their parents and school personnnel. The participant is required to take both the perspective of a handicapped person and that of those who interact with the handicapped.

Throughout, the assumption is made that the issue is *not* whether or not children with physical and mental disabilities shall be integrated, if possible, into programs for regular education children, but what will be the outcomes of that integration and what kinds of alternative solutions can be generated for any resulting problems.

DIRECTIONS

Special Alternatives is composed of eleven different Problem Categories. In each category there are six Problems. The total number of Problems is sixty-six.

In *Special Alternatives* persons work in teams of three or four persons. Since a team cannot function with less than three persons, it is best to have a team of four people. Then the activity can continue even if one member of the team is missing on a particular day. The same people continue on a team until that team reaches criterion.

Each team should have a copy of these instructions and a kitchen timer or clock or watch that records seconds. Each Problem is taken

separately. The order of the Problems, from beginning to end, is I-1 to XI-6. Every team begins with Problem I-1. The team members sit facing one another. Each member of the team should have a small notebook in which to write down solutions for each of the problems. One person, the Recorder, reads the Problem and sets the timer for 2 minutes by turning the timer past the 5 minute mark and then back to the 2 minute mark. This begins the Solo Period. In the Solo Period each person on the team has 2 minutes to write on his pad or notebook as many unique solutions for the problem that the group is working on as he or she can think of in that time. A unique solution is a solution that is not similar to any other solution on any other person's list of solutions. Solutions do not have to be written out in detail. Use only enough words necessary to help remember the solution well enough to tell others about it at the end of the Solo Period. During the Solo Period each person works by himself and may not speak to another person.

When time is up (timer sounds or recorder sees by his watch that 2 minutes have passed), all persons stop writing and begin to read their solutions aloud to one another. Any solution that a person reads that is the same or similar to that of another person must then be crossed off of every person's list on which it appears. Any solutions that remain on anyone's list after all cancellations have been made are unique solutions.

Two solutions are similar if at least two team members say that they are similar, or if one member who does not have the solution that is being questioned says that they are similar. Since the goal is to strive for unique solutions, the team members should be as hard on each other as possible.

If and only if <u>each</u> participant has at least 2 unique solutions remaining on his/her list, the Recorder sets the timer for a 2 minute Team Period. If

one or more participants has fewer than 2 unique solutions left on their lists, the team goes on to the next problem and sets the timer again for the Solo Period.

During the Team Period the Recorder again sets the timer for 2 minutes. Then all the participants work together to generate 2 more unique solutions. The Recorder writes this down in his notebook as the members call them out. At the end of the two minutes the participants check to see if at least 2 of the solutions generated during the Team Period are unique (not the same or similar to any solutions created up to that point). If they have created at least 2 more unique solutions during the Team Period, they are said to have reached criterion and go on to the next problem. The person to the right of the last Recorder now becomes the new Recorder.

For each Problem Category each Team begins with Problem 1 and works until they have done Problems 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. If they reach criterion in <u>both</u> the Solo and Team periods on 4 of the 6 problems they can go at once to the next Problem Category (labeled with a Roman Numeral). If they reach criterion on the first 4 problems, they skip the last 2. If they fail to reach criterion by the time they get to Problem #6, they must go back to the problems where they failed to reach criterion in the Solo and/or Team Period and rework these problems until they have reached criterion on 4 out of 6 problems. Then they may proceed to the next Problem Category.

Note - Where the term "Special Educaiton" is used it refers to programs for children with physical and mental handicaps and disabilities.

Problem Category I - *Uses For An Object*

I-1 Name uses for a stick.

I-2 Name uses for a pair of matches.

I-3 Name uses for a ball.

I-4 Name uses for a table.

I-5 Name uses for construction paper.

I-6 Name uses for a rubber band.

Problem Category II - *List of Items in a Category*

II-1 Name things that can be done in a field trip.

II-2 Name items that can be found in a special education classroom.

II-3 Name objectives or goals that special education and regular education children have in common.

II-4 Name things that can be done to help a person remember facts.

II-5 Name things that students can do in school that would make them feel good about themselves.

II-6 Name activities that could be part of a physical education program.

Problem Category III - *Possible Consequences of a Given Antecedent (Not Social)*

III-1 A child's wheelchair breaks down at school. What things can the child and his/her friends do?

III-2 Five blind children enter a school in the fall, but there are not enough books written in Braille for all of them. What things can these students and their classmates who can see do?

III-3 Name things that could happen if at school children from the regular education program have to share a play area with children from the special education program.

III-4 Name things that would happen if at school there were only enough room outside for only 3/4ths of the students to play or congregate.

III-5 What things can a teacher do if he loses his voice?

III-6 Children from the 6th grade of a one-story elementary school are to visit the multi-story intermediate school they are to attend next year. Many of the children use wheelchairs. What things can be done so they can see the whole school?

Problem Category IV - *Possible Consequences of an Antecedent (Social)*

IV-1 What things could happen if regular education and special education students ate lunch together everyday?

IV-2 What things could happen if students never spoke when called upon to answer a question?

IV-3 What things could happen if regular education students had to spend 25 minutes a day in and/or out of class with special education students?

IV-4 What things could happen if students always shouted out answers without waiting to be called on?

IV-5 What things could happen if a regular education student started calling a special education student names?

IV-6 What things could happen if a school faculty spoke a different language than the students spoke?

Problem Category V - *Number of Things Fitting Certain Constraints (Not Social)*

V-1 List things that children can learn by teaching other children who cannot talk and use wheelchairs.

V-2 List ways that a student who is blind can still participate in most of the school activities that students who can see participate in.

V-3 List school activities that require special equipment.

V-4 List the kinds of lessons that can be taught by showing, not telling.

V-5 List P.E. activities that children can engage in with other children.

V-6 List games that children can play that do not require keeping score.

Problem Category VI - *Number of Things Fitting Certain Constraints (Social)*

VI-1 List ways that students can get the attention of a teacher who is blind.

VI-2 List ways that students who can't talk can communicate with their classmates and teacher.

VI-3 What can a deaf student's classmates do so that he knows that certain signal bell and buzzers are sounding even though he can't hear them?

VI-4 A student needs special help but there are too many other students in the class for the teacher to give the student all the help he needs. What things can the student's classmates do?

VI-5 List things that regular education students can do to help a child, who is retarded and having a hard time learning the rules of soft ball, learn to play the game.

VI-6 What things can a child do who is very small in size and is being picked on by the rest of the class?

Problem Category VII -*Number of Solutions for a Problem (Not Social)*

VII-1 List ways for remembering an appointment.

VII-2 List ways of distributing 50 tickets to an important athletic event in a school where 300 students want to attend the event.

VII-3 List ways to avoid accidents at school.

VII-4 List ways for determining the worth of an athletic program that is to service both handicapped and regular education children.

VII-5 List ways to use public and educational television to make children aware of the various kinds of jobs that are held by persons with handicaps.

VII-6 List ways of reporting student progress in school to parents who do not read or speak English.

Problem Category VIII -*Number of Solutions for a Social Problem*

VIII-1 List things that can be done to get students to include a child who is mentally retarded in their activities.

VIII-2 A student, while being reprimanded, swears at a teacher. List things the teacher can do.

VIII-3 The parents of handicapped children complain that their children are not allowed to eat lunch with the regular education children. The Principal replies that handicapped children slow down the lunch line (can't carry their own trays, move slowly, can't give the right amount of money, etc.). What can the parents and the school personnel do so that the children can all eat together?

VIII-4 What things can be done to help a child who is retarded and has become a bully, get along with other children by not bullying them?

VIII-5 List things that students and teachers can do together to reduce the number of fights at school.

VIII-6 List ways to get teachers who hate teaching children out of teaching.

Problem Category IX - *Antecedents of a Consequence (Not Social)*

IX-1 Children who were thought to have short attention spans, now spend long periods of time working with only minimal supervision. List ways this could have happened.

IX-2 A classroom that in the past was occupied by special education children is now occupied by both special education and regular education children, what things might have happened?

IX-3 Students who used to hate school, now can't wait for school to begin. List things that could have happened.

IX-4 Special education students who used to be able only to attend private schools with other special education children, now attend public schools with regular education children. List things that could have happened.

IX-5 School walls that in the past were dirty and marked up, are now always clean. List ways this could have happened.

IX-6 There are students in a classroom, but the only teachers visible are other students. What things could have happened?

Problem Category X - *Behaviors to Achieve a Social Outcome*

X-1 A teacher wants to increase the level of community support for the school's special education program for handicapped children. What can the teacher do to get increased community support?

X-2 Foreign language speaking immigrant children, in a certain school district, are often diagnosed as mentally retarded and placed in special education classes. How can the parents of these children obtain the support necessary to stop this practice?

X-3 A group of high school girls would like to be admitted to intra-mural sports teams which, in the past, have only been open to boys. What can the girls do to get community support for their demand to try out for these teams?

X-4 During recess, at an elementary school, the regular education children take over most of the playground and play equipment. What can the special education children do to get the regular education children to share more of the playground and equipment with them?

X-5 What things can students do that will make teachers strong advocates of student rights?

X-6 What can two students do to make other students like a new friend of theirs who is mentally retarded?

Problem Category XI - *Antecedents of a Social Consequence*

XI-1 Name ways to explain how a boy who is blind learned to hate going to school.

XI-2 Name ways to explain how a girl who is deaf learned to like being in a new school with students who are not hard of hearing.

XI-3 Name ways that a student with a reading disability got a friend to help him with his school work.

XI-4 Name ways to explain how a child learned to be afraid to go to school.

XI-5 Name ways to explain why a handicapped teacher is avoided by all other teachers.

XI-6 Name ways to explain how a girl in a wheelchair came to be elected president of her class at school.

*The Hawaii Integration Project recommends that Directions and Problem Categories are typed on 5" x 8" plain index cards (one Problem Category per index card) using large or primary type.